

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(Section of the Library Association)

HON. EDITOR: W. B. STEVENSON
(Hornsey Public Libraries)

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The Library Assistant Announcements

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS AND COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1940

IN accordance with Rule 6 (e) of the Association, nominations for officers and members of the A.A.L. Council are invited as follows:

Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Editor, eight members of Council.

Nominations must be made by two or more members of the Association, countersigned by the nominee, and submitted in writing to the Acting Hon. Secretary, D. E. Coulth, Public Library, 598 Fulham Road, S.W.6, not later than 20th December. Should the number of nominations exceed the number of vacancies, ballot papers will be issued with the January **ASSISTANT**.

The remaining members of the Council will be elected as follows: President and Vice-President—nominated by the Council; seventeen Divisional representatives—elected by Divisions in accordance with Rule 6 (c).

Council Notes

THE A.A.L. Council met on Wednesday, 22nd November, and considered arrangements for carrying on the affairs of the Association during war-time.

It was resolved, owing to transport problems and the necessity for economy, to hold three meetings only during the coming year, in February, May, and October. The Officers of the Association will consult as to calling any other Council meetings that may be necessary.

The Council then considered financial problems and the possible fluctuations of membership, and it was resolved to exercise the strictest economy in expenditure, in order that the Association may have a reasonable sum in the treasury when war ends.

The **ASSISTANT** will appear regularly, so long as printing costs are kept within limits: a less expensive cover paper will be used, and issues will be restricted to twenty-four pages. No new publications will be printed during the war, but Phillips' *Primer of classification* will be reprinted in the near future.

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Correspondence courses will continue, and it is hoped to run a short revision course for the May 1940 examinations of the Library Association.

The resignations of Mr. W. H. Phillips, the Acting Honorary Secretary, and Mr. A. K. Bristow, the Honorary Membership Secretary, were received with regret. Mr. D. E. Coulthard has volunteered to act as Honorary Secretary and Mr. H. Wiggs as Honorary Membership Secretary. It was resolved that Mr. T. I. M. Clulow be appointed Vice-President for the remainder of the year.

The Council then considered nominations for the Honorary Officers during 1940. The following were nominated:

<i>Vice-President</i>	.	.	.	Mr. F. M. Gardner.
<i>Hon. Secretary</i>	.	.	.	„ D. E. Coulthard.
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	.	.	.	„ J. T. Gillett.
<i>Hon. Editor</i>	.	.	.	„ W. B. Stevenson.

It was resolved that support be given to the efforts of N.A.L.G.O. to ensure that salaries of Officers serving with H.M. Forces be made up to them.

In a Reception Area

FRANK M. GARDNER

JUDGING from what I read in the professional journals, I am hardly qualified to speak of libraries in war-time, since I am still functioning as a librarian, my staff are still all librarians, and my buildings, apart from air-raid shelters, still function entirely as libraries. Some of us, it is true, are on call as A.R.P. workers, but this has not so far caused serious disorganization, and one of the caretakers who caused some worry by his mysterious disappearance on the outbreak of war, was restored to us undamaged a few weeks later much refreshed by his period of intensive dart-playing as a member of a decontamination squad.

In my innocence, I thought this was general, and that the Declaration of Liverpool had saved us from a repetition of what happened in the last war, until messages from other libraries reached me. The appointment of senior officers to special work was of course inevitable, but the taking of large numbers of staff seems unnecessary, and the taking of buildings inexcusable. Nothing, it seems, can expunge from the official and military mind the idea that public libraries are redundant and partially unoccupied buildings. I hear of one colleague in the West of England who lost his

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entire building at a moment's notice, and was only allowed to live on in his official residence as an act of grace. Another has saved his children's library only. It is the greater tragedy that some of the worst commandeering of buildings has been in reception areas, for it is in these areas that most work is to be done.

The first problem, of course, in all reception areas was to cater for evacuees. Luckily, perhaps, the fine weather of the first week or so kept children out of doors, although some parties of children were asking to "join the library" within three days of coming into the town. The short breathing space enabled us to gain contact with teachers and billeting officers. The fact that many schools organized parties for the purpose of changing books helped to minimize congestion, and of course, since the schools had not reopened, borrowing could be spread out over the whole day. Fines were waived for evacuees, and would-be readers were asked to give both their home and billeting address, with the head teacher's signature. This was considered a desirable precaution. Pressure on stocks was great, naturally, and the evacuation took place at the worst time of the year from our point of view—when the autumn rush into the children's libraries was just about to begin. I hoped for some help from the scheme for sending children's books from evacuation areas, but although the organization of distribution was perfect, one cannot say the same of the material distributed. I received a total of 1,800 books, which worked out at about one book per child reader—which, if the war lasts a year, is not too great an allowance, and if it lasts as long as we are told to prepare for, is a poor allowance. Of those 1,800, perhaps 500 are in a fit condition to be placed on the shelves. The remainder are merely a burden. Surely it should have been possible for someone to have seen at the distributing end that only books with a year's hard wear in them were dispatched? Possibly mine has been a special case, since I cannot believe that all the London libraries have taken this opportunity to get rid of their discards. It is not too late for something more to be done, and the best thing would be a money grant pool to reception areas. But, judging from the interest evacuating areas have taken in their charges after they are off their hands in other, and more important matters than books, I suppose it would be a mere vision to imagine the London libraries' next financial year devoting some part of their book fund to a general pool for children evacuated to other parts of the country. Other towns than my own have considerably more evacuees

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in proportion to population and, unless some real help is given, librarians in those towns will find their carefully built-up children's libraries dissipated and beyond anything but complete replacement.

Quite apart from evacuees, it should not be forgotten that most towns in reception areas have received other additions to population of a temporary or semi-permanent nature. Staffs of London offices, civil servants, and others have settled down for "the duration," and many of them find their way to the library. In towns near London, also, there is another kind of evacuee, who has brought his family to live in the country while continuing to work in town and travelling backwards and forwards daily or at week-ends. Taking a long-range view, I feel that this war will mean the permanent redistribution of large masses of population, and will be a good thing, in view of the unnatural growth of London, for the country as a whole, but it would have been better for the process to have taken a number of years rather than a few months. From the library point of view, one problem is to give reasonable service to this temporary and semi-permanent population with a minimum of red tape, but reasonable safeguards. While one is anxious not to deny books to anyone, it has already been found that in the drift of evacuees back to London library books are among those trifles easily forgotten. The same problem causes difficulty in catering for troops stationed in reception areas. While permanent units such as anti-aircraft batteries can be permitted library membership in the ordinary way, I have found that other bodies of troops change so frequently and are apt to leave at such short notice that little can be done to cater for their leisure beyond providing magazines.

It will be some time before we are able to judge what the effect of the war will be on issues. In children's libraries, of course, issues have increased enormously, but so far in adult libraries the increases are normal and what had already been provided for. On the one hand, the black-out has led to more reading, and new readers are coming in, but on the other, an earlier closing hour, and the amount of spare time taken up by voluntary civilian duties, or, in the case of manufacturing towns, of more overtime being worked, means that fewer visits can be paid to the library. One expected result of the black-out is that branch library work will increase at the expense of the Central; one unexpected result, already observed, is that non-fiction reading is increasing at the expense of fiction. Two methods suggest themselves as possible means of maintaining services in the face of the black-out. One is the provision of small temporary branches

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and delivery stations in shops to save people from having to walk a long distance. The other is the issue of more books per ticket and the allowance of a longer period for reading. This would have the effect of reducing congestion during the limited opening hours, but it would also naturally have the effect of increasing the number of books constantly out on loan—already high in proportion to total stock in many libraries.

With what we might have to face, in the way of reduced expenditure, increased book prices, and lack of materials for ordinary maintenance of buildings, the problems we have had already are minor matters, although they are new in library history. New problems bring new ideas, and it is probable, if libraries do not emerge from the war entirely crippled in resources, that they will be even more firmly implanted as a necessary public service than before. One belief I do cherish firmly. The British people goes into this war better informed and better equipped for obtaining information than in any previous quarrel it has taken on, and it is up to us to see that it is just as well informed on how to make a reasonable and lasting peace. We want a peace on the ideas expressed in such books as Streit's *Union now*, not on the whipped-up outpourings of a yellow Press similar to that of 1919. It is more our duty to see that such books are circulated than to cater for black-out boredom.

The County Scene

MARCUS S. CROUCH

IT is with more than usual diffidence that I have undertaken to continue the "County scene" articles which Miss Carnell initiated more than a year ago. It is an honour to edit the contributions to one of the very rare expressions of county library opinion. It cannot, however, but be anticlimax to follow one who has done more than anyone else, county librarians excepted, to put the counties on the map. New Zealand's gain is a real loss to the English library scene. It is unnecessary to wish Miss Carnell success; that is certain. But with all her other friends I wish her every happiness in her new job.

The quotations and questionnaire in the June "County scene" have provoked some lively and contradictory comments. The rights and wrongs of supplying light fiction are not particularly "county" problems; but the counties, which are younger systems and have no deep-rooted

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traditions of service, have perhaps a more urgent need of discussing them. Not that discussion will produce any practical results, even in the counties. For better or worse, book-purchase policy is settled now in every system ; but, as Mr. F. S. Green says, the question " strikes at the roots of our professional practice . . . every librarian ought to have an opinion on the matter."

The first essential is for the librarian to define his attitude to the reader. " The librarian must guard against the danger to which he is particularly open, of becoming an intellectual snob " (*F. S. Green, Kent*). It is undeniable that a great many of the younger assistants have adopted a superior attitude towards the public, which is at least as dangerous as the other extreme of grovelling. The " 'nuther light novel " reader is no less, and no more, deserving of attention than the representative of the intelligentsia ; and is incidentally much more interesting to serve. " One of the primary duties of an assistant is to provide reading matter to meet the demands of the public in as efficient a manner as possible. It is grossly unfair to divide up the public into sheep and goats and to provide for the sheep only ; supplying the goats only when they desire the same as the sheep. . . . No librarian could hope to satisfy everyone completely ; but at least he can try " (*E. N. Moore, Gravesend*).

It is quite obvious, however, that there must be selection. No County Branch Library, carrying on an average 12,000 volumes, can hope to supply more than a very small proportion of the yearly output of light reading. The Branch Librarian must therefore select. And he should be allowed, under the ruling of the County Librarian, to select for himself. " County Branch Librarians, I feel sure, are anxious to raise the standard of fiction on their shelves, but are perhaps discouraged by the fact that they have no voice in the question of book purchase " (*A. G. Evans, Devon*). No doubt this complaint will be echoed in other counties. The extra work which requisitioning of individual fiction titles by branches involves is certainly justified by the results. With a Branch Librarian worthy of his position, the resultant fiction stock would be conditioned by the nature of the community and the standards adopted by the authority, not by his own personal tastes and sociological theories. Selection should take into consideration the needs of the particular community, and " the varying intellectual levels " (*F. S. Green*) of the readers, as well as any hypothetical standards of quality which the books may possess. It is, of course, absurd to pretend that there are not certain standards, though I agree that they

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are governed by no hard and fast rules ; but as librarians we are concerned with other things besides literary quality. " Our concern is not the quality of the book, but the effect on the reader " (*A. H. Wallace, Lancs.*).

Miss Carnell's questionnaire in the June ASSISTANT called forth varied comments. I am glad that the old complaint that uncritical reading was the result of social and political unrest did not receive unqualified approval. Librarians are too often impatient Utopians. " Rome was not built in a day," says *Miss E. Barltrop (Ealing)*, " and violent readjustments seldom do more good than harm." And most County workers in particular would say that Miss Carnell's estimate of " the third generation of universal education " was over-optimistic. Education does not exist without an adequate supply of books, and this—if it exists to-day in many remote districts—has not done so for more than a single generation.

Apropos of the newness of the County service, *Mr. A. G. Evans (Devon)* says, " Many County Branches have in recent years been opened in small towns where there had not previously existed any public library, but where the twopenny libraries had, so to speak, got in on the ground floor. The larger towns, on the other hand, already possessed their public libraries long before the twopenny libraries began to appear and probably managed to convert a considerable section of their public to more purposeful reading before the tripe-mongers began their work."

There were, apparently, no whole-hearted advocates of absolute standards of value, but that was probably because of the difficulties of definition. Most of us would agree with *Mr. Green* : " If a librarian is worth his salt he ought to solve the question satisfactorily, even if he cannot always put his case clearly in black and white " ; and with *Miss Barltrop* : " There can be no absolute standard of value for fiction, but one can safely say that tripe never did anyone any positive good. The values of fiction must remain relative, just as good and evil are entirely relative."

" Do County Branch Librarians really want to raise the standard of fiction on their shelves ? " From the catalogue, most county branches known to me have at least as high a standard of fiction as the majority of municipal libraries. Their shelves seldom bear witness to this ; an evil to which Mr. Green suggests a remedy. " I think that we ought to duplicate to a greater extent copies of worthwhile novels on our shelves, which are well-known titles and which readers complain are always out. I think that there are sound works which could profitably be duplicated to a

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greater extent than they are at present, which would swell issues and appeal to readers who would otherwise take mere trash." The branch librarian does honestly try to maintain the balance of loyalty to his public and to his Headquarters' policy. His principal aim should be, as nearly every correspondent pointed out, "proportion."

"Would you exclude from your shelves any or all of the following authors : Albanesi, Ayres, Charteris, Deeping, O. Douglas, Crofts, Farnol, Pendexter, Riley, Robertson, Robins, Joan Sutherland, A. S. Swan ?" Mr. Green counters with another and a searching question : "How many librarians who write and talk about this fiction business have read examples of all the authors cited ?" It would be good to have some honest confessions on this point. Certainly, without first-hand knowledge, one cannot have the understanding and sympathy which are our first essentials for our work. Most of the correspondents were not willing to bar the above authors from the library, either because of the absence of any real standard on which to base a ruling, because of the genuine recreative and emotional value of the novels, or because—as Mr. Wallace surprisingly claims—they have informative value (Pendexter for history, etc.) or provide emotional culture.

The last word on the subject of the supply of light fiction has not been and is not likely to be said. Each assistant must think it out for himself and make his own compromise. I should like to close with two pertinent quotations.

"What right have we to demand an absolute standard of value for fiction when the non-fiction issues, of which many libraries are so proud, are so largely made up of sensational biography and travel ? Where is the difference between sitting in an arm-chair, imagining that you are taking part in adventures among the head-hunters of Borneo, and imagining that you are driving, perfectly gowned, in one of Emmeline Morrison's limousines, with a tall, dark, handsome hero beside you ? We suggest that the difference is one of degree and not kind" (*N. L. Shackleton and V. Jones, Cheshire*).

"I fancy that even now things are not as black as they are painted" (*A. H. Wallace, Lancs.*).

For the next "County scene," I should be glad to have news of, and opinions on, evacuation, as it is affecting county libraries. Evacuation has set the counties a great problem and given them a great opportunity, and reports, especially from the smaller—and sadly inarticulate—counties,

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should be stimulating. Assistants in evacuation as well as reception areas are asked to send their notes and comments to me, at the County Library, High Street, Tonbridge, Kent.

Valuations

R. L. W. COLLISON

FULHAM'S list on Civil Defence is an attractive folder with registration form attached. The Home Office handbooks and memoranda are followed by a representative collection of books—some "agin' the Government"—including Haldane, the Anti-war Group of Cambridge Scientists, and the Atlas of Gas Poisoning. A few books on Nursing and First Aid are a legitimate addendum to a useful publication. The annual report from the same library shows the refurnished newsroom with readers seated at the newspapers. Mention is made of the necessity for a central store or reserve books in the Metropolitan area, and no doubt if this were developed in conjunction with the National Central Library, London would possess as a whole a book service more on a level with that provided by the great provincial cities. Inter-availability of tickets has been arranged with Paddington and Hammersmith.

Birmingham prints the usual "Form of bequest" at the beginning of its annual report, but it is debatable how far this familiar decoration of library publications is of any effect. It savours somewhat of begging, more especially in this case where the wording is limited to bequests of money, no mention of books or museum objects being made. Issues have increased by nearly a quarter of a million to over four and a half millions—an impressive total. The Shakespeare Memorial Library is always of wonder to the onlooker: recent additions include translations in Russian, Roumanian, and Lettish, and scripts for broadcasting. The book stock is well over a million volumes. A curious feature of the report is the table of borrowers' ages arranged by five-year periods, from which we find that 50,000 borrowers are under 14 and 65,000 over 60: the numbers diminishing steadily from 15,000 readers between 21 and 25. Book expenditure is £15,000 and salaries and wages nearly £41,000 out of a total of £99,600, of which £5,200 is received in income. Professional staff number 233 and porters and cleaners 83. It is interesting to note the name of Cadbury as Chairman.

An amusing Victorian cartoon, depicting the overthrow of the Literary Institute by the creation of the Public Library adds attraction to *Watford's*

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report. Issues have increased by 179,000 to 699,000, due largely to the North Watford branch, which was opened about two years ago. Percentage of borrowers is now the remarkable figure of 35. Tottenham has reprinted E. M. Forster's valuable broadcast address on "Reading as usual"—a service which might well have been done co-operatively for all libraries by the Library Association. The bulletin issued by this library includes in its foreword the brilliant catchword for murder stories—"whodunits"—and is one of better examples of a live booklist, with a bright but not facetious causerie, which is topical but not unbearable.

Rugby has gone one better than all the rest in the institution of a lending-library service of prints of modern and classical paintings and engravings. The folder which introduces this feature is enviably well designed and sets new standards—even for Rugby, where sureness of taste has always been a *sine qua non*. Over one thousand pictures are available and are already greatly appreciated, although the scheme was launched just after the declaration of war. Half-inch oak loose-backed frames to contain the prints are sold at cost prices or lent at 3d. a month. The list of artists includes Hokusai, John, Lewis, Memling, Modigliani, Nash, and Toulouse-Lautrec, and the sources range from art magazines to Seemann's albums, the total initial cost being less than £10. Rugby is to be congratulated on breaking new ground and on providing a worth-while and legitimate extension to library activities. Incidentally, its notepaper is dignified and well designed.

The *County Libraries Section* continues to issue its co-operative lists, the latest being "The History of painting, education, and rural life." Each is a straightforward comprehensive list, but lacks illustrations and annotations. A list on Arts and Crafts from *Devon County* is suitably arranged by type of craft and includes Gesso, Lamp Shades, Musical Pipes (lots of people make 'em, but are they ever played?), and the inevitable Weaving. A pleasing woodcut of a spinning-wheel from a book by May Holding decorates the cover.

Dagenham's journal has a blank inner cover with the typical O'Leary touch—"Space to let—6d. per line." Very much resembling *Recommended books*, it gets over the difficulty of putting a long string of symbols for branches by stating "All" where a copy is available at every library. But in a modern system such as Dagenham, which probably interloans books daily between branches, it seems unnecessary even to indicate to which branch a book belongs.

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A small and obviously select list on Music from *Leeds* is delightfully printed and contains some rare but desirable items : Vincent d'Indy's piano works, Hindemith's *Nobilissima visione*, Mompou's compositions, Ravel's *Concerto for the left hand*, Schonberg's piano works, and Malipiero's *Cello sonata* are only a few plums from a rich dish. This is where the small library is inevitably at a disadvantage in comparison with the larger systems, for almost any piece of good music is assured of a steady demand among a large population, whereas its purchase in a small town would be unjustified.

Little is heard of the *Regent Street Polytechnic* whose book stock rivals that of many a London Borough. Such a library can afford to ignore almost entirely popular demand, and concentrate on worth-while books. It may therefore not be amiss to draw attention to two lists which are still current—one on Psychology and the other on Modern Foreign Novels, each of which is detailed enough to be a contribution to bibliography, and the latter of use to other librarians in its lists of Continental fiction, of which reliable lists are almost unobtainable.

Southwark changes the composition of its committee every six months and therefore takes up valuable space with two pages of names—most of which are the same. Issues have increased by 77,000 to 748,000, and it is estimated that issues from the Reference and Commercial Libraries amount to an additional 200,000. A financial summary is not given, but the book fund cannot well be less than £3,000, and salaries perhaps twice that figure for a population of 147,000, which is crowded into an area of 1,165 acres.

A very attractive duplicated report comes from *Hitchin*, which has partly severed itself from the County Library, although it still borrows a certain number of books from the County twice a year. Of a population of 17,230, 18·4 per cent. are already readers and issues are 66,339, the highest daily issue being 556. Expenditure is just over £1,000, of which nearly £250 is paid to Hertfordshire County. Since the library has been in its new quarters only from September 1938 the potential figures for issues and borrowers are evidently much higher. Book stock is composed of 2,400 permanent stock and 3,500 books from the County. Those who remember the poor conditions which Hitchin endured until so recently will congratulate Mr. Ashby on his remarkable improvements, which are obviously due to the great enthusiasm he has shown in developing a good library system in a small town.

Without fail, *Boston's* bulletin, "More books," continues to arrive, although the convoy system makes it later than ever. The Central Library's

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hours of opening—9 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sundays 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.—sound more convenient than our own. There are 33 full-time libraries. One is amused by the detached interest of the reviewer of Churchill's *Step by step*: "This collection . . . gains an increased interest through the outbreak of war." *Toronto's* "Music in modern life" has a modernistic cover in black, white, and green and gives an excellent map showing the position of the twenty libraries which serve the city. A book on the Printing Crafts, issued by the same library, has more than sixty pages on all aspects of the subject, is well annotated, and is a valuable hand-list. The annual report is a welcome introduction to the work of this famous library, for the Chief Librarian, Mr. C. R. Sanderson (of *Library law* fame), has himself assumed the three (formerly separate) functions of Librarian, Secretary, and Treasurer, and has appointed two departmental heads to take charge of the business office and engineering and maintenance work respectively. The mistakes of a Board member in alighting from a street car some distance from a branch library resulted in its name being changed to one which more nearly described its geographical position! Provision for a summer library service to City playgrounds for children is still in abeyance. Issues amount to well over four millions, borrowers to 39,700, and expenditure on books to more than \$67,000. Each head of a department makes a separate report to which she signs her name, and among these varied and often fascinating accounts one notes that microphotography is being used extensively for the reproduction of books printed before 1550 and that "The Registration ship has reached port safely after a busy year, coming into port with increases in all branches of the work."

Stretford, one of the most remarkable medium-sized libraries in England, has a membership of 38·3 per cent. of the population. Over £2,400 is spent on books and binding for this town of 66,000 people, and issues reach the high figure of 846,751. Perhaps the proximity of Manchester accounts in some measure for the high standards which this system maintains, but due honour must be paid to an authority which provides five libraries and a staff of twenty-four.

A town of 9,000 can rarely support a good library service on its own, but the latest report from *Heckmondwike* shows that the improbable is not impossible. Seventy-four thousand books were issued to 29 per cent. of the population. Only £115 is spent on books and £335 on salaries, and it is certain that the town is getting much more than its money's-worth from the £688 it spends on libraries. The single duplicated sheet of a

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statistical report from *Warrington* contains the unusual item of £121 from an insurance company for stock damaged by fire, all of which was spent on replacements. From the same town comes "Europe, 1918-1939 : the quest for peace"—a well-duplicated list with some very fine lettering on the cover. *Hull*, whose increasing population now totals 318,700, issued more than two million books for a low book fund of £3,766. Like Dagenham, Bristol, and Exeter, it maintains a bindery in which 16,076 volumes were bound at a cost of £1,487, the staff of the bindery numbering twelve.

Bristol has reverted to normal hours of opening and has an excellent series of lectures in progress, including Vachell, R. B. Mowat, Walter de la Mare, and a talk on Bristol Ships, at which "the original log book of the *Black Prince* (a Bristol slaver) for 1762-4 will be on exhibition." In addition to an illustrated leaflet giving concise details of the library system, Bristol has issued a comprehensive Handbook of Information, printed as delightfully as ever, and consisting of information in such palatable form as to be a continuous readable account of the service. The George Riseley Library of Music contains "full orchestral scores of works by Elgar, Weber, Berlioz, Gounod, Coleridge-Taylor, Beethoven, Schumann, Auber, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Raff, and the complete Wagnerian operas."

Paddington's small handbook to the service is printed in what I privately call "Faber style"—owing to the frequent use of large black circular spots to mark paragraphs. Of especial interest is the Reading Room, which the handbook rightly calls "comfortable, spacious, well lit, airy, and clean," and which is in reality one of the best modern equipped reading-rooms in London. The recently opened Reference Library has a remarkable stock of books—well balanced and up to date, and the equipment for maps and pamphlets would draw sighs from most Reference librarians. A special song index running into some thousands of entries is being compiled to supplement printed records and should prove of use to more than Paddington residents.

Mitcham has rushed out (I feel I am justified in so saying as the list is dated September) a fine list on War and an even more useful pamphlet on Grow Your Own Vegetables, with a neat wood engraving by "W. H. C." A handbook issued by the same library has the bright idea of printing on its otherwise blank back cover. "The Library Service is provided for you"—thus effectively acting as an ambassador even if accidentally turned upside down.

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Lecturers at *Liverpool* include Bernard Newman and Allison Peers, and at *Mansfield* Vernon Bartlett, G. A. Birkett, Derek Patmore, and Lovat Dickson—on his favourite subject, “Grey Owl.” *Mansfield*’s annual report shows a percentage of borrowers of 34·2 and issues of 372,000 to a population of 47,000. A new Museum and Art Gallery was opened during the year and exhibited sixteen loan collections, ranging from paintings to carved ivories, and tin-box products to the caskets presented to the Duke of Gloucester on his Australasian tour. The photographs show two plain but pleasing exhibition rooms with good lighting.

Issues in *Doncaster* increased by 20,000 volumes to 389,000. The annual report is printed with a narrow block of text “sign-posted” by headings in legal fashion. The effect—though probably to be condemned by purists—is not unpleasant and is certainly unusual. *Gillingham* as usual is right up to the minute—had the Librarian been in Rome in the first century A.D. I truly believe he would, at the appropriate moment, have rushed out a hand-list on Pyrotechnics and Roman Culture—with a new service of small collections of books delivered to Wardens’ and First-aid posts. Library hours have been cut to 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., but borrowers are allowed two novels and four non-fiction books at one time. An attractive duplicated list on Hitler’s Germany (complete with the ubiquitous swastika) has also been issued.

Sheffield’s Research Bulletin No. 1 is right up to date with the subject War Gases, giving, however, recent additions in other subjects. The annotations are so genuinely expert as to be of considerable use to other librarians in the selection of technical works. *Luton*’s handy miscellany, “Winter night’s entertainment,” bears an ambitious design by Miss N. Hale, of the Luton School of Arts and Crafts, creditably reproduced by the duplicator. *Long Eaton*’s bulletin in current “cinema-folder” fashion is well printed at 27s. 6d. per thousand copies, and bears a good selection of books. *Herne Bay* has issued an extremely well-duplicated monograph on Somerset Maugham, while *Faversham* is equally enterprising but perhaps a little cruel with—“Are you tired of . . . your job, or tired of looking for one?”—a novel way of introducing books on technical subjects.

Haydock has issued an amusing handbook to the library called “The Smith family and Robinson,” and *Accrington* a very well-annotated children’s bulletin—both of the last items duplicated. *Burton-on-Trent* is always active, and its two duplicated lists on New [Children’s] Books and Gardening, are well designed with good cover illustrations; while

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the monthly bulletin (printed by the New Centurion Publishing Company) has a neater and more dignified cover than I have seen on other bulletins issued by the same firm. Burton's compliment slip in copper-plate of last summer has given place to a sans-serif and dignified modern slip in autumn tints of light and dark brown.

A detailed and comprehensive report comes from *Bingley* and could be a model for many a larger town. The population is 22,000 and is served by a central library and two evening branches, with a staff of Librarian, three full-time and three part-time assistants. A book fund of £530 produced an issue of 201,318 volumes. Accommodation is far from ideal, but it is apparent that the whole system works with efficiency and enthusiasm. *Prescot's* charming bulletin has aptly phrased articles on books, publishers, and authors, and has managed to maintain a freshness of outlook although in its twelfth number.

Two periodicals complete my survey this month : *Dacaal* continues West Country history with another instalment of the rambling and often amusing True History of the Devon and Cornwall Division. V. G. Turner writes some naïve but honest Impressions on Entering the Library Service, and A. G. Evans contributes some fragmentary notes from a County Branch Diary. *Dacaal* intends to remain in existence if possible and, should the war temporarily prevent its publication, promises to return at a later date. *Lancashire County's "Staff bulletin"* is ably edited by M. S. Crouch—who has now, I believe, gone to Kent County—and includes news of staff activities, short articles and items of local information, an exchange of ideas between branch librarians, and a very welcome page of cartoons—all excellently produced by a duplicator on blue paper with a cover in light grey with a dark-blue design by Mr. Wells.

Students' Problems

D. H. HALLIDAY

NOW that we are beginning to hear from some of our elusive colleagues who used to do library work before the stampede, we may claim to be finding our feet, if not to be settling down. It would appear a presumption to speak with certainty about the future of library education with civilization itself none too secure, but it seems that if the present comparative calm persists (I write in November) there is

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every likelihood of our educational activities continuing with a minimum of interruption.

As has been announced already, the Library Association have cancelled the examinations which were to be held this month. It has not yet been decided whether future December examinations will also be cancelled and the practice of holding annual May examinations, as in the last war, adopted. In view of this possibility, the A.A.L. Correspondence Courses which were to have begun in November, finishing in time for the December 1940 examinations, have provisionally been cancelled. (Students should note that these courses only have been cancelled and all other courses are continuing.) If the Library Association decide to hold the December 1940 examinations, then it is likely that an effort will be made to start correspondence courses in the Elementary and Intermediate sections in January, finishing in time for the examinations.

The delay until the May 1940 examinations will mean some inconvenience for students who have just concluded courses—though most will rejoice in the opportunity for proper revision which could not have been obtained in these trying months. A possible method of bridging the gap seems to be the provision of some revisionary lectures of a similar type to the Revision School held earlier this year. Again I speak of a personal hope only, but with a firm belief that something can be done if the support of students is forthcoming.

In the case of oral classes, I can speak only of the London area. Efforts are being made to resume various Polytechnic and Evening Institute courses—at Fulham, Catford, Brixton, the North-western Polytechnic, Croydon, and perhaps others. This is promising—more than we hoped for two months ago—but, writing before details of the response are known, I can see a danger of there being too few students for so many centres, thus causing classes to lapse through lack of support, and perhaps discouraging authorities from recommencing in future years.

It would seem that the future of professional education will depend more upon students than tutors, most of whom are in a position to carry on for the present. Military service will interrupt the studies of an increasing number of male students—a cruel blow to themselves and to the profession. That is inevitable; but there is another, unexpected, danger which is becoming manifest. It is a loss of interest among students caught up in the urgency of life to-day—a restless desire for action which librarianship does not provide—and it may become a real threat to the profession.

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I should have thought that the experience of many of our colleagues who have been rudely jettisoned into other spheres would serve to disillusion them about the glamour of Action on close acquaintance. The sustaining interest of library work has some points against the boredom and monotony of other activities which promise more excitement.

There is a very direct reply to folk who talk of the "dullness" and "ineffectiveness" of library work, and the need for "pulling one's weight," etc. They have adopted a set of values which are unfortunately necessary for the prosecution of a war, but which are nevertheless transient and artificial. Our work in libraries is lasting and constructive. It is a work of peace and it makes for peace. War is destructive, and it is particularly destructive of the things that books stand for; consequently the world is going to need books and libraries and librarians more than ever before. After the last war, librarianship was able to take its opportunity because librarians had continued to believe in their work during the years of war. Libraries must keep going now and they must prepare for the peace that will follow. There will be opposing forces, mainly I think a cry for ruthless economy. To meet this, the library movement must be strong, and its strength will depend on its personnel, inevitably weakened by the gaps caused by war. The weight of defence cannot be borne by those who are uncertain of the value of their work. Now is the time when enthusiasm for one's job is needed as never before. Just as it is essential that libraries must go on, so it is essential that all who can should continue their studies, so that they might be equipped to take part in the defence of libraries.

I seem to have strayed into rather loftier tones than usual, but I can promise that the future contents of "Students' problems" will be more practical and less exhortatory. To this end, would tutors and students please continue to send material.

Our Library

CONDIT, LESTER. *A Pamphlet about pamphlets*. 1939. Pp. x, 104.
Bib. University of Chicago Press. 4s.

THIS extensive pamphlet attempts to write everything that can be written about pamphlets, and what the author has left out the bibliography of 12½ pages must adequately cover. The whole information could have been included in 40 of the type-facsimile pages, but apparently the American technique of detailed specialization demands 278

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such descriptions as, "buildings or rooms in which pamphlets are kept will vary in their conductivity of heat and moisture, their heating and ventilating systems, the protection afforded against cyclones, earthquakes, fires, floods, hurricanes, marauders, termites, and tornadoes." No mention is made of A.R.P.!

HANSON, J. C. M. *A Comparative study of cataloguing rules based on the Anglo-American code of 1908.* 1939. Pp. xiv, 144. University of Chicago Press. 10s.

The results of this comparison of rules from 18 European cataloguing codes with rules 1-135 of the Anglo-American Code are intended, (1) to assist standardization, (2) to facilitate comparison of rules and forms of entry for use in given instances. The practising cataloguer of the large library will find this work extremely helpful in reaching a decision on points which are not satisfactorily dealt with in the A.-A. Code. The student cataloguer will find it most useful if only to provide him with criticism for and against many of the debatable rulings of the Anglo-American Committee. Suggestions for standardization where practices vary are sound and of basic value. Although this product of long study is presented simply the process of collation and comparison must have been a real "labour of love."

W. B. H.

Correspondence

CENTRAL LIBRARY, TWICKENHAM,
MIDDLESEX.

19th October, 1939.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—

Mr. Bryon, in the October issue, makes the sweeping statement that "library buildings erected during the last five years show little improvement in external appearance." What grounds has he for this statement? He quotes but one example: he makes no detailed comment of specific designs of buildings. Does he not realize that library design is conditioned by its main feature, namely the lending department? If we have book stands round the walls, windows must be above. This means an expanse of brick or stone on the exterior. We may prefer an alcove lending department: this allows variation in use of and design of windows, but means a far greater area is needed for the department or congestion will arise.

Finally, are not cinemas far vaster expanses of brick or stone than any library known to most librarians?

Yours sincerely, ERIC M. WRIGHT, A.L.A.

A.A.L. PUBLICATIONS

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SAYERS: LIBRARY COMMITTEE, 2nd edition, 1985. 7d. post free.

SMITH (Ed.): REPORT ON HOURS, SALARIES, AND CONDITIONS, 1982. 2s. 2d. (1s. 8d. to members) post free.

In Preparation

CHRISTOPHER, H. G. T., Editor: SEQUEL STORIES. Revised and enlarged edition.

Obtainable from S. W. MARTIN, A.L.A., Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

MARCH

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RECOMMENDED BOOKS

VIENNA. By Edward Crankshaw. *Macmillan. 8s. 6d.*
Mr. Crankshaw sees Vienna as a city of anachronisms. That seat of culture and elegance, that nursery of supreme architecture and music, that object of countless nostalgic songs, lives on in these turbulent times like a ghost out of the past. Vienna's autumn flowering, the iridescence of decay, set in with the reign of Maria Theresa, and the author traces the fall of that great culture: a decadence in which he sees reflected, as in a distorting mirror, the decadence of Western European culture as a whole. Vienna danced and sang its way into legend, but its fame and its greatness were built on sand.

MODERN MONEY. By Myra Curtis and Hugh Townshend. *Harrap. 7s. 6d.*

An outline of modern monetary theory and practice for the general reader and the elementary economics student. The authors strike a happy mean between over-simplification which would leave the reader guessing and over-elaboration which would leave him gasping, and they never lose that grasp of fundamentals so essential in a book of this type, nor do they ever fail to relate monetary problems to general economic life. The subject of controlled money is perhaps rather lightly dealt with, but further exploration would take the book out of the field in which it is a remarkable success—the readable and general survey for the general and inquisitive reader.

HEREDITY AND POLITICS. By J. B. S. Haldane.

Allen. 7s. 6d.

Haldane, as usual, careful, provocative, and never for a moment dull, here examines some of our common social and political doctrines in the light of genetics. The science of human reproduction is invoked to throw new light on the theory of man's equality, the theories of racial inequality, of racial purity and superiority, and other eugenic ideas. The sum effect of the author's prodding is to cast down our more enthusiastic eugenists who believe that sterilization of the unfit is a possible solution to our ills. Haldane disclaims the suggestion that the relation of eugenics to genetics is that of astrology to astronomy, but the phrase sticks as a summing-up of the intention of this book.

MY HOUSE IN MALAGA. By Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell. *Faber & Faber. 8s. 6d.*

Here is one aspect of the Spanish War, told without rancour by a distinguished Englishman. When the Civil War came he remained neutral, sheltering refugees, while becoming friendly with

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the Republicans who were then in power. He dismisses stories of "atrocities," while acknowledging that the first flush of power brought some looting and execution of spies; but his time in Málaga under Republican rule was a period of friendliness and goodwill. When Franco took Málaga the friendliness disappeared; the very man he had sheltered was the first to arrest him, and he became immediately a suspect and a "Red." No one can fail to be convinced of the sincerity and truth of his narrative; no one can read this book without being saddened and yet uplifted by this story of an heroic people fighting for freedom and democracy.

THE MORAL BASIS OF POLITICS. By Naomi Mitchison.

Constable. 8s. 6d.

Whether he likes it or not, man nowadays must be a political animal. The freer the state he lives in, the more this truth is forced upon him. Freedom must be fought for every day. But "if I do so-and-so I lose my job, I sacrifice my career . . . the others will think I've betrayed them . . . I shall lose my seat. . . ." Divided loyalties, leading to so much inconsistency in behaviour, so much private heart-searching, what can we all do about them in order to put ourselves right with the world and our consciences? Every man and woman to whom such questions mean anything at all will be helped by this sincere attempt on the part of one distinguished woman to think things out for herself. She touches shrewdly on the meaning of good, on moral values, and on the question of violence. However wide her survey, the practical issue is never lost sight of. That is the peculiar value of her book.

THE TRUTH ABOUT WRITING. By Cecil Palmer.

Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

By writing is of course meant professional writing, and most of Mr. Palmer's truths are unpleasant ones for those who imagine a 'short-cut to success in free-lance journalism. He depicts success in the literary market as being an uphill climb, ending often in an abyss, and the qualities he postulates for that success are not so much brilliant writing as staying-power, doggedness, and an optimism that can surmount "the persistent return of one damned manuscript after another." For the aspirant with those qualifications, there is here some good advice. The literary genius will find no profit in it unless he too belongs to the school of thought of Doctor Johnson.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

FLYING FOX AND DRIFTING SAND. By Francis Ratcliffe.

Chatto. 16s.

The day of the explorer is over. The day of the pioneer nearly so. Now comes a new kind of traveller to help man in his attempted conquest of the earth—the economic biologist. Here is one such, called in to solve two problems in Australia, widely different in location and type. The first was in Queensland, where large bats, numbered in millions, devastate fruit crops. The second was in South Australia, where wind erosion is converting large areas of sheep-land into desert. The occasion of these researches has produced a travel-book of rare quality, rich in observation, humour, personality, and a dramatic quality derived from the object of the author's travels.

THE GOLD COAST, YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY. By Paul Redmayne. Chatto & Windus. 10s. 6d.

The author is as good a photographer as he is a writer, and this attractive book, half text and half illustrations, gives a remarkably complete picture of a colony which now produces almost one half of the world's cocoa crops. A vivid account of the hideous slave-trade days, when Dutch and Portuguese and British fought furiously for the control of this lucrative business, is followed by a description of the Coast as it is to-day—its economic organization, administration, and social life. Fifty-six pages of superb photographs range from delicate architectural and landscape studies to jolly pictures of village life.

THE HEALING KNIFE. By George Sava.

Faber & Faber. 8s. 6d.

Another doctor's book? Yes, but this one is a little different from the others. The road that Dr. "Sava" (the name is assumed) took to his English practice and his medical degree was as strange, tortuous, adventurous, and difficult as fate and man's inhumanity could make it. An aristocratic outcast of the War and the Russian revolution, he wandered Europe, penniless, unwanted, passportless. How ludicrous that the last should be the most important lack of all! From the account of his first "operation" with a red-hot clasp-knife to his appointment as a Senior House Surgeon in a German hospital, the strange, unbelievable story moves swiftly from one adventure to another. There must be much more to tell, and the reader is left at the end asking for more. That is why this book is a little different from the others.

H.W.W.L.

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RECOMMENDED BOOKS

DUSK OF EUROPE. By Wythe Williams.

Scribners. 12s. 6d.

Ostensibly these are the memoirs of a newspaper correspondent, but memoirs with a moral. As an eye-witness of European history in the making during the past twenty-five years—the Great War, the Peace Conference, the founding of the League of Nations, and the long-drawn-out futility of the Disarmament Conference—he has a thrilling tale to tell, and he was near enough to the great ones—Nivelle, Clemenceau, Briand, House, Northcliffe, Stresemann—to know the news behind the news. But as an American, he inevitably draws conclusions disturbing to European readers. He sees the last quarter-century as a decline leading to a crash, with diplomats leading the dance over the precipice. A racy, voluble, and pessimistic book.

THE EPICURE'S COMPANION. By Edward Bunyard.

Dent. 7s. 6d.

A companion to the temperate enjoyment of the pleasures of the table which contains as much goodness as the apple pie which the author rates so highly. Not at all an exotic gastronome need the reader be to enjoy this book, for it is as rhapsodical about onions as about ortolans, and though it says a good deal about tomatoes, you will find no mention of truffles. On drink, too, it is democratic, being sound on wine but equally devoted to beer, and Messrs. Bass and Guinness have their due esteem. The meal is rounded off with speeches, in the form of an anthology, and with conversation and anecdote, both reminiscent and practical.

THE INTERNATIONAL ANARCHY. By G. Lowes Dickinson.

Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the standard book on pre-war politics, now re-issued in a cheaper form. It is no dry recital of treaties and conferences, but a book written with the purpose of showing the consequences of the sorry game of power-politics. Working on the original documents, Lowes Dickinson has traced the growing anarchy in European politics from 1870 onwards : the battle for "prestige," the pacts, the secret alliances, and all the other political moves, leading to distrust, armaments, and the preparation for war. The Great War was "caused" by the assassination at Serajevo : but here we have the real causes. The ace in the pack of political cards is the threat of war; and the author has shown how power-politics lead inevitably to that card being played.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

THE IMPRESSIONISTS. *Allen & Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

A picture book of the glorious nineteenth century of French painting, with 117 reproductions, many of them in colour. The logic and decision of Manet, the rosinesses of Renoir, hovering on the edge of prettiness, the light and ethereal ballet girls of Degas—all the great ones are here, with many lesser masters. Monet and his water paintings; romantic, breathless Sisley; simple Pissarro—all the variations of individuals and the changes of technique have been brought out in the selection, which yields so rich a harvest as to be almost unbelievable.

SPANISH TESTAMENT. By Arthur Koestler.

Gollancz. 10s. 6d.

Casts more light on the inner nature of the Civil War and on the mentality of the rebels than any book which has yet appeared. Part I gives an eye-witness account of life in Madrid and of the fall of Malaga, preceded by an historical survey of the background of the struggle. Part II, described by the Editor of the "New Statesman" as "a permanent addition to knowledge," and "one of the classics of prison literature," details the author's mental reactions whilst imprisoned under daily apprehension of death.

SCRATCH A RUSSIAN. By H. S. Marchant.

Drummond. 7s. 6d.

Starting at Archangel and finishing at the Rumanian frontier, the author took an unusual route for the tour of the Soviet Union which he describes here with much humour and gusto. Away from the beaten paths of the ordinary tourist, he met all kinds of people whose opinions and mode of life are not often recorded in books on modern Russia. His light-hearted but acute sketches of people, conversations, and social customs in a bewildering country leave us with a much clearer picture of conditions there than we would get from a conventional description twice as long.

THE SUMMING UP. By W. Somerset Maugham.

Heinemann. 10s. 6d.

The title is apt ; for in this book one of our finest authors reviews his life, his writings, and his philosophy. In life he has found "much less good than ill," and though recognizing virtue when he sees it, he has observed and recorded men's follies without condemning them. His novels and plays grew from an urge to write, and his observations on style and literature generally, though personal, are both discriminating and interesting. His philosophy is Stoic, for he recognizes the need of a God, but cannot find Him ; and he approves of Goethe's maxim that "the

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secret of life is living." The book leaves us with the impression of a man aloof, yet keenly sensitive to all around him ; and a writer lucid, intelligent, and broadminded.

HELEN'S TOWER. By Harold Nicolson.

Constable. 15s.

He writes carefully, deliberately, smooth and urbane as a Foreign Office diplomat, and as deliberately drops the shattering adjective, the unexpected phrase, that turns the sentence awry and twists its meaning. The style is inimitable, unique, and here a suitable objective for such a weapon is found. A charming, admiring portrait of a no doubt great statesman, the Marquis of Dufferin, changes as you watch it, and in its place stand a little boy and his governess. Indirect autobiography one calls it, for want of a better phrase.

DECORATION FOR THE SMALL HOME.

By Derek Patmore.

Putnam. 10s. 6d.

The "stately homes of England" are fast disappearing. We are left with small houses, bungalows, or flats. What are they to be ? A hideous muddle of furniture and bric-à-brac, or planned for comfort, beauty, and convenience ? Patmore is a planner ; and with his guidance the home-maker will do well. Living-rooms, bedrooms, and dining-rooms are described and arranged sensibly. Modern space-saving furniture is illustrated ; period furniture in modern settings is not neglected, while additional chapters give good advice on lighting and fabrics. The illustrations are excellent, and the book as a whole will provide many ideas for the practically minded.

200,000 FEET ON FOULA. By Michael Powell.

Faber. 12s. 6d.

The "feet" were film. To Foula, an island in the Shetlands, Mr. Powell went to make "The Edge of the World," his idea being to show dramatically how the outer isles of Scotland were being depopulated. Foula was, in fact, already little better than a desert. But the author and his technicians found in its austere barrenness, its stormy weathers, and sincere, gravely humorous people a compelling charm. Twice they were marooned, with aeroplanes and supply ships hurrying to their rescue ; but, half starved and wind-flayed, they went on "shooting." The author's account of the making of the film is full of fascinating detail. But the island and the men—both carved, as it were, out of the very stuff of the elemental—are the real theme of a book which is at once exciting, witty, and revealing.

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RECOMMENDED BOOKS

FEMININE FIG-LEAVES. By C. Willett Cunnington. *Faber & Faber.* 5s.

"Feminine Fig-leaves" is a "jeu d'esprit" which includes several speculative theories, some salutary home-truths, more than one villainous pun, and a good deal of admirable writing. Eve, Dr. Cunnington suggests, with her vision clarified by a fruit diet, noticed her reflection in a pool and was grieved to see the way her waist-line was degenerating. And promptly she conceived that device of disguise and embellishment, dress. Ever since then, we are told, woman has employed costume, with its thousand little charms and diversities, to conceal with the object of arousing curiosity. But to the tangible fig-leaves woman has learnt to add mental fig-leaves: a flora for "furnishing the mind." Thus "the great Maternity Stunt" presents a choice of leaves "behind which she can, if she chooses, conceal her personality." It is an instinctive habit of the sex. As a theorist, Dr. Cunnington may touch some thin ice, but his figures of eight are adroit and zestful. He leaves one thinking.

SOUTH OF HITLER. By M. W. Fodor.

Allen & Unwin. 10s. 6d.

The book is already out of date, because its author declares that miraculously Austria still carries on an independent life. The prophecy is there all the same, in one of the best books on post-war Europe since Gunther's, which is in most respects superior to that excellent survey. As the correspondent of some of the greatest newspapers and journals in England and America, the author can be relied upon to give facts, when facts are to be obtained; as a good journalist he can be relied upon to write well and present his story with clarity. To this he adds an ability to tell the complicated story of the mess of Europe after the egregious Treaty of Versailles with something of the comprehension of a Macaulay.

THE OXFORD BOOK OF GREEK VERSE IN TRANSLATION. Edited by T. F. Higham and C. M. Bowra.

Oxford University Press. 8s. 6d.

An anthology that will delight both the scholar and the layman, containing translations of all the poetry in the "Oxford Book of Greek Verse." The editors wisely have not confined themselves to any one period for their translations, and the reader will find the best by both classical and modern authors: the choice runs from Pope and Gilbert Murray to T. E. Lawrence and Louis Macneice. The originals cover the whole period of Greek verse from Homer through the classical dramatists to Bion and Moschus. In addition, brilliant prefaces by the editors outline the form and structure of Greek verse, and show the obstacles to be surmounted

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by the translator. Here is a book that is a delight to handle and to read, worthy of the traditions of the Oxford Press, and a notable companion to the other Oxford books of verse.

LION AND SHADOWS. By Christopher Isherwood. *Hogarth Press. 7s. 6d.*

Readers of some of the best novels since 1920 will already be familiar with "Herr Ishyvoo." He gives here an account of his youthful years, from just before leaving school to his departure for Berlin. It is, he says, part novel, part autobiography ; he has contrived the fusion with skill and liveliness. Portraits of contemporaries, his friends at Cambridge, are disguised as characters : but real events impinge upon himself, and these are described with his own particular vividness and exactness.

ALONE THROUGH THE FORBIDDEN LAND. By *Gustav Krist. Faber. 12s. 6d.*

An overwhelming desire for a bathe after a long journey in the desert, and a meeting with a Turcoman suffering from the attentions of a guinea worm, led the author into strange paths. He resolved to visit Turkistan and Bokhara again, and this resolve gave rise to an eighteen months' journey over Central Asia, the "forbidden land" of the Soviet autonomous republics. Suspicious commissars, lack of funds and passports were no deterrents; posing as a geologist, under an assumed name, he penetrated to Bokhara and Samarkand. He lived with the Kirghiz tribes for months, and finally escaped into Persia. His wanderings and escapes, his sense of humour and power of observation are fully displayed in this excellent book.

SOUTH LATITUDE. By Dick Ommeney. *Longmans. 9s. 6d.*

Mr. Ommeney has never regretted his decision to take up the study of whales as a change from university lecturing. Nor will the reader, for the result is this stunning book on South Georgia and the Antarctic Continent. He worked there for seven years, he helped to rescue the American flyer, Ellsworth Lincoln, he was marooned amongst the ice-floes with a motor-boat that wouldn't start. It is difficult to avoid superlatives in praising his stark and pungent description of the arduous and endurances, the humours and mishaps, of life in and around Antarctica. In brief, one of the grandest narratives of travel and adventure that polar exploration has produced.

SPEECHES AND DOCUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. *Oxford University Press. 2 vols. 4s.*

A collection of the facts essential to a study of world affairs since the Great War, from President Wilson's Fourteen Points to

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non-intervention in Spain. Locarno and Kellogg pacts, the Zinovieff letter, Germany's Peace Plan, the London Naval Conference, the relevant documents are given in detail. Ably edited and presented, the newspaper of yesterday is condensed for reference in interpreting the newspaper of to-day.

PHILOSOPHY AND THE PHYSICISTS. By L. S. Stebbing.

Methuen. 7s. 6d.

The popularity of such expositors of science as Jeans and Eddington is largely due to their gift of happy phrasing and to the philosophic conclusions they draw from the facts of science. Here a trained philosopher criticizes their phrasing and attacks their conclusions. She has an easy target, and does not press her victory too hard, but devotes a good deal of space to a constructive examination of the relations between modern scientific discovery and philosophic ideas, for which the common reader will be grateful.

POPULAR PSYCHOLOGICAL FALLACIES. By James G. Taylor.

Watts. 7s. 6d.

Popular manuals of psychology have turned us all into amateur psycho-analysts. Professor Taylor is an experimental psychologist, and he treats his subject as a science, requiring definite results before a hypothesis can be formed. In so doing he demolishes many fondly held theories: that dictators are neurotic; that one race is superior to another; that dreams are fulfilment of wishes. On the constructive side he has many striking things to say about intelligence tests, industrial fatigue, the Soviet trials, propaganda, and the Oxford Groups. A varied and interesting book, clear, concise, and simply written, it will help us to be more logical about psychological theories advanced too airily and accepted without enough evidence.

CONVICTIONS AND OBSESSIONS. By F. H. Westaway.

Blackie. 10s. 6d.

The human mind has had many will-o'-the-wisps, some mere delusions, others idealistic conceptions. It has had other more solid convictions. Beginning here with delusions, the author examines astrology, alchemy, witchcraft. He deals with squaring the circle, a fantasy now recognized as impossible, and with the fourth dimension, a fantasy to the author. He then turns to an examination of some beliefs, philosophical and religious, which to doubt was once heresy, concluding with an enquiry into the nature of truth itself. A serious, careful, and fascinating book.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

MAY

1938

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

THE EVOLUTION OF PHYSICS. By Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld. *Cambridge University Press.* 8s. 6d

The distinguished name on its cover will ensure that this book is read. As an exposition of physical knowledge it is certainly more clear, more fundamental, and less hampered by philosophical speculation than any previous work addressed to the general reader. But it is not an easy book. It is no "Relativity in five minutes," to be read in competition with the wireless and outside interruption. But the reader who takes trouble will learn just why Newtonian physics has been displaced, why an Einstein and an Einstein theory became necessary, and he will finally glimpse through the quantum theory what physics is leading to.

ONE-MAN CARAVAN. By R. E. Fulton

Harrap. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Fulton may or may not be the first man to have gone round the world on a motor-cycle. He is certainly the first to write such an engaging account of this adventure or to convey its spirit so admirably in his photographs. In seventeen months he rode 40,000 miles through thirty-two countries. There is something interesting here about most of them, but the longest and best part of a good book is about India and Afghanistan. Particularly fascinating is his description of the Waziri tribes, whose shooting habits reduce the Wild West of fiction to the level of an amusement arcade.

MAN, BREAD, AND DESTINY. By C. C. Furnas and S. M. Furnas. *Cassell.* 10s. 6d.

Hunger being the motivator of the human race, the story of man's food should be an interesting one. It is, in the hands of two enthusiastic and informed writers. They tell us what man has eaten and does eat, from roasted ants to blood soup; what man should eat, with a clear explanation of the mysterious vitamins, carbohydrates, and proteins; and what man should not eat, if he wishes to avoid decayed teeth and decayed stomach. After reading this book there is no excuse for the housewife throwing away the cabbage water or the head of the household refusing his milk, even though he does find a scientific basis for enjoying his beer.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

THERE'S A DEVIL IN THE DRUM. By John Lucy.
Faber & Faber. 8s. 6d.

Here the yarn of an old sweat. He (and his brother) joined an Irish regiment in 1912. They loathed the life ; they loved it. One found his death on the Marne ; the other survived to write one of the best war books issued for many a year. It is the simple narrative of a professional soldier, yet it gives a better picture of a war than many more pretentious books. Stendhal would have liked and admired the admirable account of the dreadful retreat from Mons, when only one of the most extraordinary military mistakes in history prevented the Germans from reaching Paris. A thrilling story, a heartrending story—but to the author just a plain account of an honest bit of soldiering.

AIR ATTACK ON CITIES. By J. Thorburn Muirhead.
Allen & Unwin. 4s. 6d.

There have been too many books on air warfare that paint horrible pictures of devastated cities and populations mad with fright. Here is a book of facts : written by an engineer who both knows his job and has studied the literature of the subject. He has much to say about gas attacks and how to combat them ; and what he says is more reassuring than usual. He tells you how your house can be made gas-proof ; he describes the effects of high-explosive and incendiary bombs ; and he gives enough detail about all these things to enable the plain man to judge whether he will be safer at home or in an air-raid shelter. This is a concise, well-informed, and able little book.

SAINT PAUL. By A. D. Nock. *Butterworth.* 2s. 6d.

We know Saint Paul only from his writings, despite the apocryphal description of him as "Small in stature, baldheaded, of vigorous physique, with meeting eyebrows and hooked nose, full of grace." And it is difficult to write a life of him that is more than an appendage to the New Testament. Dr. Nock's small, simple book is the more to be commended in that it succeeds where larger works have failed. It is an absorbing study of the man, who in spite of his many bitter defeats, was more than any other responsible for the fact that Christianity rose from a Jewish cult to a world religion.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

INSANITY FAIR. By Douglas Reed. Cape. 10s. 6d.

"Insanity fair" is, of course, Europe, and the author takes us round the side-shows at a brisk trot, returning always to the big roundabout that always fascinates him—Germany. In many ways an admirer of that country, he is convinced that the Allies of the Great War made a mistake in allowing Germany to think that her armies had been beaten in the field, and that a new war of conquest is preparing. "There is in Germany a class of ruthless men—and this class has again mastered the State—that acknowledges only the law of Germany's right to prevail by force of arms." That is a grave and pregnant statement, and if the author is prejudiced, as he admits, it is not blind prejudice. He has seen events, and of what he has seen he tells us sufficient to compel attention.

TRIAL OF A JUDGE. By Stephen Spender.

Faber. 5s.

The modern dilemma—the choice between Right and Left in politics—is typified by the literal-minded judge who tries to be fair to both sides. His words are twisted, his ideals mocked, and too late he realizes that there is no middle way : he is tried for treason and executed with the Communists whom he thought were his enemies. The characters of the play are familiar enough; the Fascists and Communists, the shifty politician, the patriotic wife, the humble mother, the martyred Jew ; yet the play, by the power and austerity of its verse, is far more than a political tract. Spender has written a modern tragedy, a drama of political conflict : sombre, moving, and not easily to be forgotten.

WALT WHITMAN : COMPLETE POETRY AND SELECTED PROSE. Edited by Emory Holloway.

Nonesuch Press. 12s. 6d.

Whitman, the poet of democracy, has been unjustly neglected of late years ; this great individualist, whose "barbaric yawp" echoed through the latter half of the nineteenth century, was in need of a good editor. His poetry and the selection of his prose and letters are his best biography : his work, bowdlerized and banned during part of his lifetime, made him the prophet of the New America. He can be prolix, vulgar, almost insufferable at times ; yet his warm humanity, his love of freedom, and the vigour and surging rhythms of his best work make him truly great. Here, in an edition that is a comely piece of book production, finely printed and well edited, he is fitly enshrined.

